



nce upon a time, and a very good time it was, a composer was born in the small German town of Gütersloh, the hometown of Hans-Werner Henze. It was here that Frank Rothkamm began his first piano lessons. After his family moved to Nürtingen in Southern Germany, he started to compose piano music in 1978 at the age of 12. His first *Leitmotif* was written on basic classical terms, so basic in fact, that he can remember it to this day. He continued to conceive music in such a manner until he had an epiphany while listening to a string quartet by Paul Hindemith on SWF radio. Frank gradually abandoned all forms of conventional notation and devised a graphic-based system of his own. This culminated in a 4-book composition for 2 pianos, in which the sustain pedals were held down at all times and the pitch movement was indicated by envelopes; much like a function is expressed in the Cartesian coordinate system. With great enthusiasm he submitted his opus to the regional state competition, the *Jugend Komponiert* (Youth Composes). It was promptly rejected. The judges did not consider it music. He was 14 years old.

In 1980 he moved to the town of Moers with his family, and studied *Harmonielehre* (study of harmony), violin and, most notably, piano with Karl Heinz Witte, a pianist renowned for his rare ability to improvise multi-voiced fugues. Frank the teenager now caught the attention of the state's avant-garde *Schlosstheater* (castle theater) and received commissions to compose the music for their plays. For the production of *Reproduktion Untersagt* (Reproduction Prohibited) Frank conceived and played a piano piece that was reproduced from a few notes of Anton Bruckner's 7th Symphony, only slowed down and stretched out in such a manner that it was all but unrecognizable.

He moved to Cologne in 1985 and while working at the University clinic transporting mentally and physically ill patients as part of his civil service, Frank formulated a simple musical language. This language consisted of algorithmic instructions given to a human (i.e. Rothkamm playing the piano) and to a machine (that is, a computer programmed in BASIC to generate tones). The resulting album, *MUSIC AFTER SCULPTURES* was released by the Maria Bonk Gallery in 1986, marking his debut as a recording artist and the last time he would use an acoustic piano.

Ten years, and thousands of miles later, Frank teamed up with DJ Glove in New York and released *TUNING* on his own Flux Records label. The album was entirely made from a recording of a woman tuning a piano. Moving back and forth between New York and California over the next decade, Frank composed 93 pieces using the piano in his beloved, low serial-number Kurzweil K2000, including commercial work, remixes, video game and movie trailer soundtracks and one *PRESTO CHANGO* for the 1997 Disklavier festival, which was entirely made from modifications to a Josef Hadyn MIDI file. In 2007, the K2000, along with most of Frank's vintage studio equipment went up in flames in the California Witch Fire.

Frank currently lives in New York and Los Angeles. In 2008 he purchased a 1968 Wurlitzer piano from a Los Angeles thrift store. He plays it as often as his repetitive strain injury allows.

OPUS SPONGEBOBICUM (2005-2008) is an Enhanced Compact Disc issued on July 2nd, 2008 in 3 editions:
1. Promo (no case) 2. Standard (cased & OPP bag) 3. Artist (40 hand-numbered, cased & polymer sealed. Includes sponge).



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